

# Testify

## ADVENT DEVOTION – WEEK 3 | DECEMBER 17-23, 2017

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Can I get a witness? John the Baptist testifies to Jesus' identity as the Messiah. John points to Jesus and away from himself. John knows enough to understand his role and status in comparison to Jesus Christ. That is our challenge, too. Rarely do we equate ourselves with the divine, however, we do often forget to glorify God and be the witnesses to God's character and actions that we are created to be.

As we get closer and closer to Christmas, to the birth of Emmanuel, are we ready to witness the saving work of God and *testify* about what we have seen and experienced? How has God been unmistakably with you? When have you known without a doubt that God has been at work in your life? In your family? At church? Have you testified to God's presence and power? Now is the time to point away from ourselves and toward the Messiah, to be a witness and *testify* to the Truth. Paraphrasing the Westminster Catechism: Now is the time to glorify God and enjoy God forever.

In our current cultural context, where divisions deepen, violence pervades and good news feels scant, this Advent season Christians still point to Emmanuel, God with us. We *testify* to God's grace, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption in our own lives and in the world all around us. We watch for the coming light, follow it, point others to it and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, even embody it.

## DAILY PRAYERS AND PRACTICES

### Monday

#### SCRIPTURE READING: ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11

Today testify to the good news that God has for those in deep distress. Bear witness to the truth that God binds up the broken hearted and loves justice. Advocate for someone who is vulnerable. Serve a meal, donate to a charity, write a note, make sure God's good news gets told through you.

#### PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

God of good news, the headlines that come at us 24/7 resound with waves of pain and suffering. The relentlessness of click-bait links and stories replete with cruelty to the vulnerable threaten to drown out your words and promises of justice and peace. Amplify your voice, quiet our fear, speak to us and through us this day. Amen.

### Tuesday

#### SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 126

Today testify to the great things that God has done for you. Make a list of those things. Take notice of them throughout the day. Write a note or prayer of thanks to God and refer to it when you need a reminder of things for which to rejoice.

#### PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Great is your faithfulness, God of grace and God of glory. Looking back, I see your providence and am reminded of your goodness to me and to all that you have made. Grant me the wisdom to see you at work in the present and the faith to trust your promise of life-giving plans for the future. Amen.

## *Wednesday*

### **SCRIPTURE READING:**

#### **1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-24**

Today testify to what is good, in the world, in others, in yourself. Take notice and then name the good you see. Encourage others by expressing your appreciation for all that is good about them. At the end of the day, pay attention to the result of naming the good you saw.

### **PRAYER FOR THE DAY:**

Too often, gracious God, we fail to notice the good of creation, of others and of ourselves. You named all you made good and yet we are quick to dwell in the ugly and obsess upon all that we deem bad. Forgive our failure to appreciate the God-given goodness all around us. Open our eyes to see all things bright and beautiful. Amen.

## *Thursday*

### **SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28**

Today testify to the light. Jesus tells us that his followers are to be the light to the world. How can you – in your interactions, your words, your choices – be a light to the world this day? Consider those places or people that need light, warmth, hope. Pray especially for them throughout the day.

### **PRAYER FOR THE DAY:**

In this season of light, strings around trees, candles in widows, fires in hearths, we pray, God of light, for those places in deep darkness. We ask to be illumined with your wisdom and understanding. We boldly seek an awareness of those dark places within us that need to be brought to your searing and transforming light. Amen.

## *Friday*

### **SCRIPTURE READING: ACTS 1:6-8**

Today imagine the spheres of your influence and consider how you can be a witness to Jesus Christ in them, from Judea to the ends of the earth. Jesus tells the disciples to proclaim what they have seen so that others will come to know him. How will you be a witness to Jesus today?

### **PRAYER FOR THE DAY:**

Almighty God, we admit that we are often uncomfortable telling others about our faith. We don't want to be pushy or seem odd. Yet, Jesus tells his closest friends that they are his witnesses in the world and therefore, so are we. Help us to testify to the love of Jesus Christ through our words, actions and daily living. Amen.

## *Saturday*

### **SCRIPTURE READING: 1 PETER 2:9-10**

What does it mean to be a royal priesthood? We believe in the priesthood of all believers, the truth that God uses all of us to further God's work. Today testify to the truth of that expansive priesthood, remembering all of those who have ministered to you and shown you the love of Jesus Christ. If you can, get in touch with them and tell them what they mean to you.

### **PRAYER FOR THE DAY:**

God of community and connection, thank you for the priesthood of all believers, the many people who have taught us about you and shown us the love of Jesus Christ. May we be to others the means through which they may come to know and love you. Amen.

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